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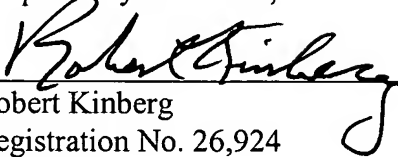
REMARKS

This Preliminary Amendment is made to revise claim 1 to clarify the subject matter which applicant regards as his invention.

Date:

1/8/02

Respectfully submitted,


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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

1. A method of replacing a[n at least partially spent] first knife, which is locked in the knife holder of a severing unit that is operative to sever smokers' products, with a second knife, comprising the steps of:

automatically unlocking the first knife;

removing the first knife from the holder; and

introducing the second knife into the holder.

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